Leys News

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PHOTOGRAPHERS WANTED!

LEYS NEWS needs volunteer photographers with their own cameras who are able to take good quality pictures for future issues of Leys News.

Please send two examples of your work with contact details to: editor@leysnews.co.uk

ISSUE 81 | FEBRUARY 2011

"BIG SOCIETY" COULD LEAVE COMMUNITIES GUESSING

Above: Sue and Glenn of Starlight. The Starlight Community Project has helped residents across the Leys to improve their chances in the job market by offering free training. With cuts in funding looming over many community projects the future of Starlight was uncertain. A local company has now come forward to try and boost their coffers. Read the full story on page 11

THE BISHOP OF OXFORD has said that David Cameron's ideas for a 'Big Society' do not have enough substance and could leave poorer communities such as Blackbird Leys second guessing exactly what will happen.

In an exclusive interview with Leys News, Rt Rev John Pritchard said that he was prepared to "give one and a half cheers" to the idea of a big society but that he feared the concept had not been properly thought through. He also said that changes and potential losses in benefits will hit families hard and with fewer community projects in place to fill essential gaps, he is concerned that the idea of a Big Society is merely a cover for the inevitable cuts.

Bishop John said: "The Big Society is all about building social capital and empowering local communities. Most of us want to make more decisions about our lives and take more responsibilities for our communities and that's a positive thing, but as Christians we have been talking about this for 2000 years-it's called the kingdom of God!"

"God wants human kind to flourish at all levels and for life to be good and there are some positives to be drawn from the government's idea. This concept first cropped up during the election campaign and it wasn't really thought through properly. In areas like Blackbird Leys where there are issues of deprivation, the loss of benefits will be felt very hard. We have to ask ourselves if the Big Society really is simply a cover for the cuts"....

Continued on page 2

Right: The Rt Rev John Pritchard, Bishop of Oxford, is not convinced by plans for a Big Society

BLAP back on the map

BLAP Chairman Kieran Watson

THE Blackbird Leys Adventure Playground is calling for new volunteers and support and is hoping to run a number of projects in the Leys in the coming months.

As Leys News went to press, committee Chairman Kieran Watson said that the organisation that look set to close last year, has applied for funding to help maintain the building and run projects this year.

He said: "The new committee would like to involve the community into a consultation that involves surveys and discussion groups. Our aim to set up children's open forum meetings during March as this will give the Leys young people a voice and a chance to be heard within the community.

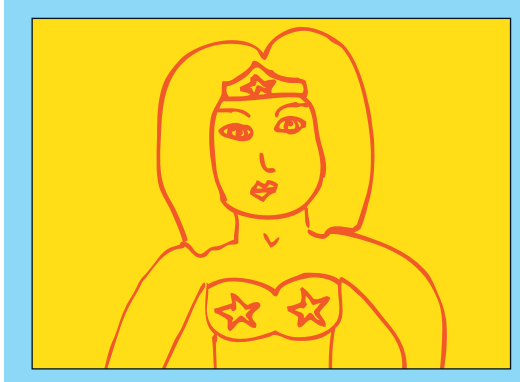
"During February we will be contacting local schools, children and youth groups to promote BLAP's logo competition that offers up to ten tickets to watch Oxford United and meet the players"....

Continued on page 2

Make your scarecrow!

Introducing the Leys Summer Scarecrow Competition. Read all about it on page 3

ALSO IN THIS ISSUE:



Wonder Woman diary

Read about Jane Yates's marathon resolution. Turn to page 4

Valentine Special

Love is in the air! See centre page

Gardening. 7
Leys Learning 11
Children's page. 12
Classified ads. 14
What's on. 15
Church News. 15
Sport. 16

Leys News 81

FEBRUARY 2011

Leys News is a not-for-profit business dedicated to providing news and information to the whole community. We are not affiliated to any political party, and we operate an equal opportunities policy. We encourage any resident to get involved in our work.

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Editorial Meetings

The next editorial meeting will be held at 10.30am, on Wednesday 9 February at the Leys News Offices in Kingfisher Green. ALL ARE WELCOME.

SUBMISSIONS

LEYS NEWS welcomes submissions and ideas for articles and photographs from all sectors of the community. If you would like to send us a press release about your community project please email it to editor@leysnews.co.uk and we will consider it for publication in a future issue.

Please note: do not embed photos and logos into word documents but sent send them as separate picture files.

The next issue of Leys News will be delivered on 26/27 February and the deadline for advertising and editorial copy is 15 February.

Volunteers: tell your story

PAULA WILLIAMS from Blackbird Leys Community Centre would like to hear from local people who have volunteered or are volunteering. She said: "I hope to be putting together a piece about the pros and cons of volunteering. I'd like to have a few real-life stories promoting the benefits of volunteering as one option to local people looking to change their lives." Paula can be contacted at the Community Centre on 01865 402070 or by email paulawilliams0705@hotmail.co.uk

International Women's Festival latest

PLANNING and preparations for the Oxford International Women's Festival are underway. If you would like to know more about the event or get involved, then visit www.oxfordwomen.co.uk or find them on facebook www.facebook.com/pages/Oxford-International-Womens-Festival/338928442652

Editorial

Hi there!

GOOD news stories are what Leys News is all about, and this month is no exception. After a very worrying time over the last few months, it looks like The Starlight Community Project may have found a little respite from its funding issues and will be able to continue with its valuable work on the Leys. You can read all about this on page 11, our Oxford Brookes University sponsored learning page.

I was delighted to have the chance to interview the Rt Rev John Pritchard, Bishop of Oxford for this issue, and he had some very encouraging comments make about Leys News and the Leys in general. He talked about The Big Society, and how he felt this and cuts to benefits will impact on families living in Greater and Blackbird Leys. In our front page story you will see how much faith he has in the fact that our community will no doubt continue to pull together and support each other over the coming months.

One story that really hit the headlines this month was the fact that fathers may now be able to share maternity leave with their partners, allowing them to spend precious time with their new born babies. At the moment, most new dads are only given a few days paternity leave (if they are lucky) so this is a great step forward. However, although we all know that spending time with our children is valuable and important, as a dad how would you feel about this? Would you feel under pressure to take extra time off, risking losing pay in the process? Please write to us and let us know your views.

Following a flurry of comments and letters to Leys News last month, our gardening writer Leah Owens has been busy working on plans to launch a regular farmers market on the Leys. Read her latest instalment on the gardening page (page 7) and if you are interested in getting involved in the farmers market idea then go along to the meeting and find out more.

As always, we love to hear from you so please keep your letters and emails coming.

Best wishes

Sarah Edwards
Editor

Big Society could leave communities guessing: *continued from front page.*

....Bishop John added that in some communities people may respond more favourably, but others may not find it as easy: "If there is an atmosphere of relative mistrust, it could mean that it can be harder for a poorer community to rise to the challenge and I don't think that every community is equipped and competent enough to take on some of the roles that have been suggested as part of the Big Society idea.

"However, communities like Blackbird Leys have huge resilience, and when the chips are down people are drawn together in ways that can be extraordinary, and great things can be achieved."

Bishop John added that he hopes people will rise to the challenge.

He said: "Let's try to make this an opportunity for moving forward and not backward. If we can all find a person or a project that we can work positively with, then that will help the community. Blackbird Leys has a strong faith community and faith groups have a large part to play in strengthening the fabric of community life. We have to have hope-it's very difficult to get that back once it has gone and it has to be generated. There are always positives in every situation."

Big Society should not reduce funding

Sue Funge from the Starlight Community project said: "Getting people involved in their community is a wonderful and positive concept that can clearly pull people together and provide an opportunity to gain a sense of belonging. However, when residents are faced with tougher and tougher times, with less opportunities for employment, more pressure to find work, and higher costs of living it is more likely that getting involved in the local community is low down on the agenda. Day to day living can be hard enough.

"The daily reality of struggling to make ends meet is more likely to lead to a sense of isolation and depression than realising any vision of the 'Big Society'. Volunteering can be a useful stepping stone, providing real opportunities to gain confidence and skills that can help in the search for paid work of further learning opportunities. However it should not be seen as a way to reduce funding in communities.

"With over 8,500 residents, The Leys already has fewer services than small towns with a lower number of residents across Oxfordshire. Investment in our community is essential if we have any chance of breaking free of this label of deprivation. Services need to be sustained and developed yet projects like ours are set to close. We believe in the potential of people and feel we all deserve the opportunity to become the best version of our selves. This is most likely to lead to positive community spirit and if we are managing financially then a little volunteering would only add to our sense of self worth. If however we are volunteering because there is nothing else out there for us and we feel devalued and used this is only going to perpetuate the more negative aspects of a community. We believe in the empowerment of people but based on a commitment to values such as self-determination, social justice, working and learning together and participation."

Sue Funge and Glen Berley run The Starlight Project and have just heard that their project may be saved from closure. For the full update please see the story on page 11.

BLAP back on the map. Continued from front page.

...Kieran added: "Our arts and craft project work during March will encourage children and young people to participate in programmed sessions, making banners and decorating the play structures before they are taken down during the April playground revamp project.

"Our committee is also focusing on having a Jubilee week, from 22–29 April that will involve a community forum to discuss BLAP's plans for future development and play delivery. BLAP will be hosting fundraising events with Oxford United and the Oxford Play Association.

"Depending on grant applications over the next month we hope to organise a children's fancy dress ball to celebrate the Royal Wedding, encouraging children to dress up as Kings and Queens from around the world. With fun activities and fundraising opportunities children will be given the opportunity to become new members at BLAP and win prizes.

Our parent, family and local resident project is under way to build a volunteer team that can take on the challenge of revamping BLAP. Local Street Wardens Lynn and Jez will be asking for volunteers to become involved. We will be also presenting our volunteer programme at the Themes Valley and Cherwell College, Oxpens Road on 7 February between 11am and 2pm.

For further information about BLAP ring 01865 747704 or email blackbirdleys.adventureplayground@yahoo.co.uk

Cartoon by Jane Yates

Tree-mendous recycling effort

RESIDENTS IN OXFORD have helped to recycle 2165 old Christmas trees.

The trees are being turned into approximately 13 tonnes of chippings to use in the city's parks and shrub beds.

Councillor John Tanner, Board Member for a Cleaner, Greener Oxford, said: "Thank you to everyone who brought a tree to one of our recycling points.

"By recycling our Christmas trees, we are reducing waste and helping to make Oxford's parks and open spaces even more beautiful."

Seventeen Christmas tree collection points were located in Oxford's parks and open spaces from Monday 4 January to Sunday 16 January.

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Leys News acknowledges valuable advice from Matt Dillon at Lloyds TSB and Mark Rusher from Critchleys. Leys News acknowledges financial assistance from: Catalyst Communities Housing Association, Oxford Citizens Housing Association, Oxford Brookes University, Oxford City Council's South East Area Committee, and the Wates Foundation.

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Leys Summer Scarecrow Competition

Holy Family Church in Blackbird Leys has thrown down the gauntlet to groups and individuals in the Leys to design their very own scarecrow - and on 26 June, win a prize worth £75.

To enter The Leys Summer Scarecrow Competition all you have to do is get your creative juices flowing, rummage through your old unwanted clothes and bric a brac, and - hey presto - you'll have a scarecrow.

Traditional, modern or just plain weird - all shapes and sizes of scarecrow are welcome. Free straw and chicken wire will be provided, courtesy of Johnsons Buildbase and a local farmer.

People will be invited to display their creations in their front gardens or outside community buildings.

On prize giving day (Sunday June 26), all the scarecrow entries (and their owners!) will congregate on the green near the Holy Family Church to meet the team of esteemed judges, who will help choose the best.

First prize is £75 and second prize is £50. Wheelbarrow transportation of scarecrows to the judging panel is optional.

Any proceeds from the event will go towards a new roof for the Holy Family Church, as the old one is slowly being eaten away by crows - hence the scarecrow theme!

Entry details and more information about the competition will follow in future editions of Leys News.

HALF TERM FUN!

IT MAY BE just a few weeks since we all went back to school, but February half term will be here before we know it!

Luckily, Blackbird Leys Leisure Centre is ahead of the game and has organised a Multi Activity Camp from Monday 21 February to Friday 25 February for children aged from seven to 12 years of age.

The centre will be running morning and afternoon sessions and children can sign up on a half day, day or weekly basis. Sessions will include a mix of sports including badminton, football, basketball plus other team games and multi skills activities.

Prices are very affordable at £2.50 per session, £4 per day or just £17.50 for the week. To book please call the centre on 467020.

KNOW YOUR RIGHTS!

LOCAL PEOPLE got advice and information at a special session about rights and benefits at The Leys Children's Centre in Blackbird Leys.

The event was jointly organised by The Leys Children's Centre, Blackbird Leys Community Centre and The Oxford Women's Training Scheme.

Suzy Drohan from the Welfare Rights Centre said that every day they see people who are not claiming what they are entitled to, or not getting the right amount of money. Suzy works with local centres including Agnes Smith and Barton Advice Centre and she stressed that when people challenge decisions they are not happy with they are often successful. She said: "You have to challenge the decision within a month of receiving the letter. If you say that you want to be present at your appeal you are more likely to get a successful outcome. The Welfare Advice Centre can always provide someone to support you. "

There are discretionary payments available if people are struggling with paying their rent. There are also extra payments if people are coming off Job Seekers Allowance. Another advisor, Dave Jones from Oxfordshire County Council, said that when he speaks to groups of people with young children eight out of 11 people are entitled to tax credits but not claiming them. He added that tax credits can be backdated.

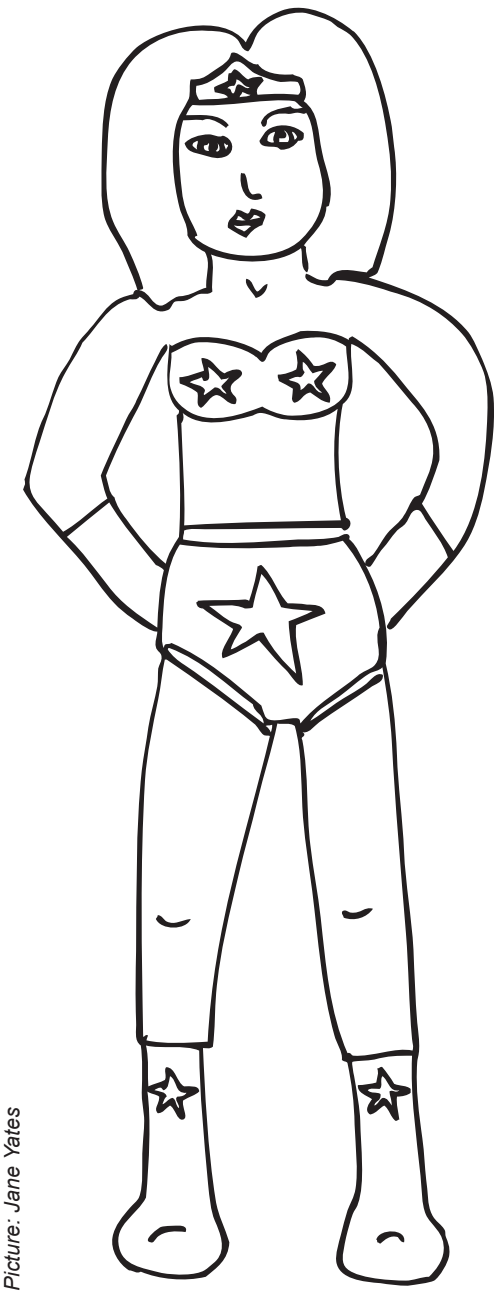
All advisers stressed the importance of finding out what you're entitled to and making an appeal against a decision you're unhappy with. Due to the changes which are coming, which will make life harder for people on benefits, the Leys Children's Centre now has access to a range of people who can give specific help and advice.

Contact the Leys Children's Centre on 01865 779615 to find out when the advisers will be available or to speak to someone.

From left to right: **Sam Buckle (*local parent*); Suzy Drohan (*Oxford Welfare Rights Centre*) - can advise on how to appeal, and can represent you if you are appealing a decision; Joumana Hamad (*Leys Children's Centre worker*) - *can advise on tax credits, benefits and training options*); Dill Lewis (*Personal Adviser with Job Centre Plus*) - shortly to be based at Cuddesdon Corner for drop in or appointments); Val Smith (*City and County Councillor*) - can advise about problems to do with housing, visits Cuddesdon Corner monthly on Tuesdays; Phone for an appointment.**

Wonder Woman diary

JANE YATES is Leys News resident cartoonist and has big plans to run a marathon this year. She will be keeping us all up to speed with her progress through her Wonder Woman diary. Here is her first instalment...



Picture: Jane Yates

MY NEW YEAR RESOLUTION for 2011, like thousands of others, is to run a marathon. Well a half marathon. I do not plan to run it next month but later in the year, well as late as possible in the year to be more precise. I did run five kilometres last June but it took months of training and afterwards I did not keep it up so have started training from scratch again.

I'm no spring chicken at 48-years-old and not a member of a running club, have no real knowledge of running but the Editor for Leys News suggested that I should write about how I get on. I am the creator of the Fat Spaniel cartoon but am pretty sure right from the start that the spaniel who is more keen on stuffing than running, will not be accompanying me, but I do hope to incorporate some longer walks, with essential pub breaks which she will insist upon, to get her a bit fitter as well.

So here goes with my January activity:

1 Jan - Bought a running magazine.
2 Jan - Read the running magazine, and decided that I would never wear Lycra.
3 Jan - Thought about going on a run.
4 Jan - Went on a short run, half a mile. A bit out of breath, but OK.
5 Jan - Woke up full of aches and pains, ate a mini roll and rather a lot of crisps, felt better. Thought Wonder Woman, more like, ' wagon wheel woman'!
6 Jan - Ran half a mile felt a little better than last time, maybe as it was downhill mostly.
7 Jan - Friend treated me to lunch and pudding! No running of any kind that day, blamed the pudding.
8 Jan - Dug out jogging trousers from very bottom of the cupboard, was pleased they still fitted, thank goodness for elasticated waist bands. I went to a gym to use their running machine. First problem was I could not change from kilometres into miles, but I eventually ran about one and a half miles, but sadly this took 25 minutes which is about twice as slow as I could run last June. Felt a little down hearted, but plan to do better.
9 Jan - I got up early and packed my gym bag. Then spied the pile of washing up, thought I would just do that before I set off, one thing lead to another, as house work often does, and when I next looked at the clock it was 1.30. I was tired and had still not set off for the gym. Although I am a bit worried that I may have done the house work rather than go to the gym as I don't like house work one bit.
10 Jan - Jogged half a mile with a ruck sack on. I have no scales and have never been very good at guessing the weight of things. For instance I have never won any of those cakes at village fetes when you have to guess their weight by holding it in your hands. But I think the weight of the bag was about the size of a medium fruit cake.
11 Jan - Read that if I did warm up exercises before jogging I might not ache so much, so when doing my normal spaniel walk around Goose Green, I incorporated squats and high kicks. Then I spied out of the corner of my eye a lady with her two dogs who after a couple of years of dog walking has only just started saying good morning. She gave me a look like I was mad and hurried off before I could explain. I went home and consoled myself with a very large bowl of coco pops. Then I wondered how many calories are there in cereal. I was horrified to read that a normal portion with skimmed milk was 116 calories and I must have at least three normal portions with full fat milk. Never mind It will give me more incentive to run it off, I thought to myself as I unpacked the nine mini mince pies from my gym bag and put in a healthy yogurt bar in their place. I ran two miles on a tread mill which tells you how much you have burnt off and I had not managed to even wear off the breakfast and was now tired and hungry again. Also I have to add that healthy bars don't taste anywhere near as nice as they look on the packet.
12 Jan - Rested. I had read that you are supposed to do that when training. So no guilt.
13 Jan - I decided that the Wii would prove a safer warm up routine. I dusted off the board and replaced the batteries, and was greeted by the message. 'Nice to see you again, it's been 372 days since our last session'. After a five minute warm up I ran two miles, slightly quicker and discovered afterwards I could feel new muscles that I am sure were not there before. Not being a medical person I believe the name for them would be acheypaineysorey muscles.
14 Jan - I swam today as I believe it's good to do other fitness training. But please readers write into the paper with any ideas or tips!

PLEASE... I need all the help I can get...!

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Leys Library Closure

AS LEYS NEWS went to press, support was growing for a meeting to save the Blackbird Leys Library. Paula Williams from the Community centre said: “It's vital that we come together and fight for our rights for our local services, such as the proposed library closures. Lets discuss the options we have, and also look at the local and national demonstrations that are planned. I feel strongly about this cause and am using all means at my disposal to rally support. The library closures will be detrimental to the local people.”

Paula added: “For those on Facebook, please join our group: “We Oppose the Oxfordshire Library Closures'. There is also a group call 'Oxfordshire Anti-Cuts Alliance”

Pooh Sticks Championship

THE World Pooh Sticks Championships takes place on Sunday 27 March 2011 at Days Lock, Little Wittenham from 11am. Once again it will be organised by the Rotary Club of Oxford Spires with help from the Rotary Club of Sinodun and other local Rotary and Rotaract clubs. Members of the village will provide teas and cakes outside the parish church, Sinodun Rotary Club will be firing up the BBQ and there are plans to have plenty of other activities as well as the main event of Pooh Sticks on both bridges across the Thames.

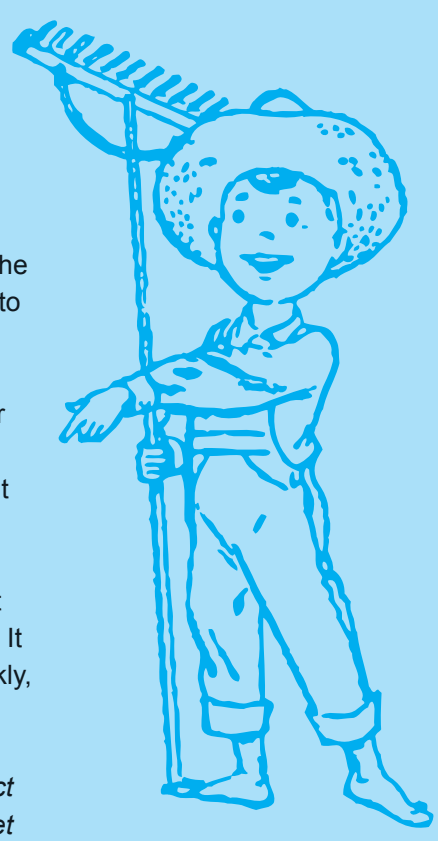
For more information visit www.pooh-sticks.com

Leys Farmers Market

A RESIDENT’S MEETING to discuss plans for a regular Farmers Market on the Leys will be held at the Barn from 6.30 to 7.30pm on Tuesday 15 Feb.

Organiser Leah Owens said: "There will be a form for people to register their interest in having/sharing a stall, how often they'd like one and what they want to sell. Quality control will be very important and if the project comes off, the market will be once a month to start with. It really depends on the response. It could be every two weeks or even weekly, if it's well supported."

For further information, follow the project on Facebook at Leys Community Market



Neighbourhood Policing

Blackbird Leys and Greater Leys Neighbourhood team

THE NEIGHBOURHOOD POLICE TEAM for Blackbird and Greater Leys is always working to reduce crime and anti-social behaviour in the area and consults with residents regularly to establish where they feel the police and other partner agencies should focus their attention. The current priorities for the area are:

Drugs – Several arrests have been made for the possession of drugs throughout December. A successful drugs warrant was carried out in Blackbird Leys where a cannabis hydroponics set up was found. A local man was charged with cultivating cannabis and appeared before court at the end of December. These arrests have made a significant impact on drug-related activity on the estate. The team continues to treat drugs as a priority and we would urge people to pass any information on to us. It will be treated in the strictest confidence. You can also contact Crimestoppers anonymously on 0800 555 111.

Anti-social behaviour – The OZONE leisure centre is currently suffering from spates of youths using their complex to keep warm. Unfortunately they are also being rowdy. Several people have been issued warnings to stay away from the complex and the situation is being monitored. Individuals that have caused anti-social behaviour on the neighbourhood have been identified and are currently being monitored. Evidence will be gathered to support future ASBO applications.

Parking – Issues were raised over parking at Pegasus First School. The area was patrolled by PCSOs and the Highways Officer for Oxfordshire. Action is being planned to improve the situation which is particularly bad during school drop off and pick up times. If any member of the public have concerns or problems regarding parking issues please contact NCP on 0845 337 1138.

Other News

Windale Primary School has suffered another vandalism attack and steps have been increased to find the offender and prevent this happening again. Information from members of the public is vitally important regarding this matter and we encourage people to contact us. Alternatively this can be done anonymously by calling Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111.

The Neighbourhood Team can be contacted on the Thames Valley Police non emergency number 08458 505505 or by e-mail Leysneighbourhood@thamesvalley.pnn.police.uk. Alternatively any member of the team will be happy to discuss any issues or concerns in person.

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Oxford Healthy Living Partnership Recipe

Winter warmers are souper!

THE Oxford Healthy Living Partnership has come up with some tasty, healthy recipes to warm you up this winter.

Community Food Worker, Christine McDermott said: "We enjoy trying and tasting the many delicious options of healthy, nourishing soups and eating them with people across the estate. The great news is, they're easy and quick to make and you can freeze them to enjoy whenever you fancy.

"There are plenty of places to look for recipe ideas and the beauty of homemade soups is they are made by you for your taste buds. With lots of experimenting with herbs and spices too you can create some firm favourites."

If you are stuck for recipes then try these ideas:

- Recipe cards in supermarkets.
- Recipe books from your local library, charity shops and second hand bookshops.
- Magazines and newspapers (particularly the weekend supplements).
- Local community cafés and Children's Centres
- Supermarket websites, for example www.sainsbury.co.uk/healthyeating
- Internet sites, for example www.allrecipes.co.uk

Creamy Butternut Squash (or sweet potato) with Cinnamon

This soup may sound REALLY unusual but here on Blackbird Leys this is a well tried and tasted this recipe and without fail, this soup is a delicious winner every time! Give it a go and tell us what you think.

- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- ¼ tsp ground ginger
- pinch of ground cloves
- pinch of cayenne pepper
- 350 ml/10 fl oz chicken broth, homemade or from a carton
- 125ml/ 4 fl oz milk
- freshly ground pepper, to taste
- 340g/12oz peeled and seeded butternut squash or sweet potato, cut into 1inch chunks
- 1 onion
- Pinch of sugar
- 2 large garlic cloves, thickly sliced
- 2 tsps cinnamon

Heat oil over medium-high heat in a large, deep saute pan until shimmering.
Add butternut squash, then onion; lightly frying, stirring very little at first, then more frequently, until squash start to turn golden brown, 7 to 8 minutes.
Reduce heat to low and add sugar and garlic; continue cooking until all vegetables are a rich spotty caramel colour, about 10 minutes longer.
Add cinnamon, ginger, cloves, and cayenne pepper; continue to lightly fry until fragrant, 30 seconds to 1 minute longer.
Add broth; bring to a simmer over medium-high heat. Reduce heat to low and simmer, partially covered, until squash is tender, about 10 minutes.
Using a blender, puree until very smooth. Taste, and add pepper if needed. Heat through, ladle into bowls, garnish and serve.

Spicy Tomato and Lentil Soup

ANOTHER soup that has proved very popular for the residents of Blackbird Leys is this simple soup. Made with a few ingredients, it's packed full of goodness, with vegetables and protein (the lentils). Served with some crusty bread this is a great complete meal in a bowl and ideal for a lovely lunch or evening meal!

- 1 onion, finely chopped
- 1 tlbsp olive oil
- 1 chilli pepper, chopped
- 190 g/6oz red lentils
- 1 can peeled and diced tomatoes
- 235 ml/ 8 fl oz water
- salt and pepper to taste
- ¼ tsp curry powder
- dried basil
- 60 g/2 oz sour cream, for topping (optional)
- 2 sprigs fresh basil leaves for garnish (optional)

Heat the olive oil in a large saucepan.
Lightly brown the onions in the oil.
Add the tomatoes, chilli pepper, lentils, curry powder and basil to the pan along with the water.

Bring to a boil, then reduce heat to medium-low and simmer for about 20 minutes, or until the lentils are tender.
When the lentils have softened, use a stick blender to puree the soup.

Season to taste with salt and pepper. For a special touch, put sour cream in a squirt bottle, and squeeze a spiral onto the top of each bowl of soup, and garnish with a sprig of fresh basil.

LEYS CDI/YP2 PROJECT

IF YOU'RE AGED 9 – 25 GET INVOLVED!

BOAT MAKING WORKSHOPS
YOUTH DROP-IN ANIMATION WORKSHOPS
TABLE TENNIS CLUB
FILM PROJECT

Young people are at the heart of this project and are involved in its running and decision making.

Get involved!

If you're aged 9 – 25 then this project is for you! Become a member on the youth management committee or just come and take part in courses or activities.

We are based at the Blackbird Leys Community Centre in the Glow Hall our door is always open.
Stop by and have a chat with our team or check us out on Facebook The leys Cdi
Email cdiyp2@yahoo.co.uk or give us a call on 01865 395927

Leys News Gardening

Brassica'd Off!

By Leah Owens

REMEMBER the brassica plug plants that I put in towards the end of summer last year? Well, take a look at the pathetic specimens in the photograph. I know - don't ask - I did everything I should have done and I've ended up with a few fronds of well nibbled green lace - inedible lace at that!

The previous year I planted some purple sprouting broccoli and romanesco cauliflower plants, but I didn't cover them or lime the soil (brassicas love lime), so the caulis were nibbled to death by caterpillars and the broccoli grew tall but almost completely spearless. In other words, I did a lazy job. Fair enough - serves me right.

This year I did all the right things - or so I thought. I planted all the brassica varieties (sprouts, sprouting broccoli, cabbage and two types of kale), in the place where my beans had - err - been, as they like the nitrogen the legumes leave behind. I added some lime and then

created a snug little fleecy tent. This served two purposes; preventing the cabbage white butterflies from laying their eggs again and to keep the plants happy over winter. I am very disheartened. I had high hopes for these, but they simply haven't thrived and I'm at a loss as to why (cue the violins).

Admittedly the soil was very poor when we moved in here; in fact it had been paved over and seemed to be comprised of builder's rubble over thick Oxford clay - a dire combination. It did have some impressive looking fat worms though - usually a promising sign - so I set about adding manure, compost and sharp sand, turning it and sieving out the stones which I used as drainage in the bottom of pots.

In the first year I grew some very impressive French and runner beans and had my most successful squash and courgette harvest to date, so I'm scratching my head as to why the soil seems to be so sterile. It's had regular applications of manure and compost since that first application and I often dig in vegetable peelings and a sprinkling of fertiliser and it's south-west facing, so gets a good combination of sun and shade.

For an amateur this gardening malarkey is a very hit and miss affair. There are brilliant successes and miserable failures and sometimes things are just okay - edible but not exactly a prolific haul. The thing is to keep trying. I know plenty of gardeners with far more expertise than me who can't grow a decent tomato and yet tomatoes are one of my best crops; and I have a herb garden to die for, so it's not all gloom and doom.

But I'm pretty determined to grow some brassicas that are actually edible rather than risible. I'll let you know how I get on. Oh - and if you are a champion cabbage grower; what's your secret?

Season's Eatings

The Best of British Food for February

Veg; cabbage, celeriac, celery, Jerusalem artichokes, leeks, parsnips, purple sprouting broccoli, spinach, shallots, winter squashes

Fruit: forced rhubarb

Meat; Guinea fowl

Fish: Clams, coley, haddock, hake, halibut, lobster, mussels, oysters, pollack, sardines, tuna

To support our fantastic fishermen please go to http://www.fishfight.net/the-campaign/ and help stop the waste of thousands of tons of edible fish through the immoral policy of discard.

Have you just taken on, or are thinking of getting, an allotment on The Leys?

We're looking for a novice "allotmenteer" to feature each month in Leys News. We'll track your progress across the seasons for a year and hope to encourage the full take-up of allotments in the area.

Contact: Sarah on 01865 711756
editor@leysnews.co.uk

Green Fingers

By Stuart Mabbutt

New tools for a new allotment

AT this time of year, it's a good chance to spread beyond the boundaries of your own garden and get an allotment. Allotments can become available but the waiting list in the towns and cities are often a lot longer than those in rural settings.

When venturing out into pastures new and getting your first allotment, it pays dividends to purchase good tools from the start, as allotment tools are regularly worked harder than the ones you use in your garden.

It's always better to select and buy your tools in person, so you can check their dimensions and weight are suitable for you to personally use. Buying online is easy, but can't get near handling tools before buying to convince you that you have the correct tools for you. Just buy the tools that you need initially, and get others if and when they become necessary.

All you will need is a good spade, but I would advise getting two types, a large digging spade and a smaller border style spade for those hard to reach areas.

The same goes for forks, get a large one for digging and also a smaller border fork. Spades and forks made from good steel is the way to go, but make sure the handles are big or small enough for your hands to grip properly.

A trowel and a small hand fork are good for potting and planting and for those close up weeding jobs on your hands and knees.

A good robust pair of knee pads would be a worthwhile purchase too, as would a pot of wire and string plus a reel and line to mark out those straight lines of crops you see in many veg plots.

Secateurs and shears again need careful considerations when being purchase as they need to fit your hands properly or you will get blisters very quickly.

Hoes come in two main types. Dutch that you push away from you to weed and a Draw hoe that you pull towards you to weed and you can draw up soil around your potatoes with it too for example. I have a third type called a Swoe which is a cross between a dutch hoe and a scythe, which can be pushed, pulled and used to weed out paving slabs too.

A good steel soil rake and wheel barrow are other things to think about, as too is a watering can. Finally, gloves, and I am not going to offer any advice here as the choice is endless and again you need to be comfortable in them.

Buy the right tools from the start and they will serve you well, buy poor quality and it will be false economy as they just will not last and you will very quickly be off to the local garden centre to purchase yourself some more.

See you all out there then on an allotment somewhere in 2011.

Happy Gardening

mail@leysnews.co.uk | phone: 01865 711756

Leys News Valentine's Day Special

THE PRICE OF TRUE LOVE!

JUST because the rest of the world seems to go crazy and spend literally billions of pounds on Valentine's Day cards and gifts-it doesn't mean we all have to!

Valentine's Day is a fun and romantic time but does not have to be an excuse to over spend. In these cash-strapped times, we have put together a few ideas for spoiling your loved one that won't cost a small fortune.

Before you even hit the high street have a think about what your partner really means to you. Instead of panic buying some tacky trinket that will soon be forgotten, why not write a poem instead? Poetry doesn't have to be soppy and romantic, it can be funny as well so take a trip to your local library and read a few poems for inspiration as well as taking a look at any books that give tips on creative writing. Traditionally, of course, Valentine's Day was about a certain amount of anonymity so if you want to declare undying love to that man/woman you have had your eye on for some time then a poem or love letter could be just the beginning of something wonderful!

Other simple and cost effective ideas for Valentine's Day include the traditional flowers, but don't be fooled into spending a fortune on red roses because there are plenty of worthy alternatives! Instead choose a bunch of spring blooms such as tulips or daffodils, they are cheaper, much prettier and signal the beginning of spring.

Shops such as Wilkinsons, the major supermarkets and Poundland have great thrifty gift ideas for Valentine's Day that are fun to buy and great to receive (see box below). However you decide to spend your day this Valentines remember that it's always the thought that counts-not the price tag!

LOVE is in the air!

LOVE it or loathe it-Valentine's Day is here to stay and every year we spend our hard earned cash on cards, gifts and flowers to declare our love to our nearest and dearest.

And this year looks like being no exception with sales of cards set to sky rocket in the run up to the romantic festival of the year. But things were not always quite so commercial, and in ancient Rome, St Valentine's Day was originally celebrated as Lupercalia, a pagan fertility festival.

In those days young men would strip naked and use goat- or dog-skin whips to spank the backsides of young women in order to improve their fertility- an early form of IVF maybe!?

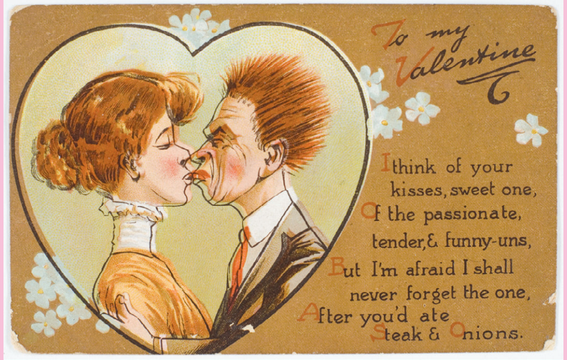
But although today we celebrate love and all things romantic, way back in history it certainly was not all hearts and flowers.

A Christian known as Valentine of Terni is martyred in the reign of Emperor Aurelian. Little is known of his life, except that he was made Bishop of Interamna (now Terni) in AD 197 and died not too long after. He was apparently imprisoned, tortured and beheaded on the Via Flaminia in Rome for his Christianity by the order of a Roman prefect with the oxymoronic name of Placid Furius. According to legend, he died on 14 February.

Another Christian, Valentine of Rome, is martyred, this time under Emperor Claudius. A priest or bishop in the city, he was apparently arrested for giving aid to prisoners. While in jail, he is said to have converted his jailer by healing his blind daughter's sight. According to another, later version, he is said to have fallen in love with the daughter, sending her a note saying "From your Valentine". In yet another, equally unlikely version, Claudius was claimed to have banned young men from marrying, so that they would make better soldiers, and Valentine was arrested for secretly carrying out weddings. Like his earlier namesake, Valentine of Rome is supposed to have died on 14 February,

Other theories include that on St Valentine's Day a court was opened in Paris, the High Court of Love, dealing with affairs of the heart: marriage contracts, divorces, infidelity, and beaten spouses. A few years later, Charles, the Duke of Orleans (a Frenchman, inevitably) writes the first recorded Valentine's note to his beloved, while imprisoned in the Tower of London following capture at the Battle of Agincourt in 1415.

By the 1600s St Valentine's Day had entered the popular consciousness to the extent that William Shakespeare mentions it in Ophelia's lament in Hamlet: "To-morrow is Saint Valentine's day,/All in the morning betime,/And I a maid at your window,/To be your Valentine."



Left and above: Two Valentine cards, one from the 19th Century, the other from the early 20th. They reveal that – despite popular opinion – Victorians actually had a great sense of humour and that very little has changed between the sexes over the past 100 years, with the cards highlighting the same relationship ups-and-downs that British couples have a century later. *Thanks to Manchester Metropolitan University for these pictures.*

By the mid-18th century the passing of love notes became popular in England, a precursor to the St Valentine's Day card as we know it today. Early ones are made of lace and paper. In 1797, the The Young Man's Valentine Writer was published, suggesting appropriate rhymes and messages, and as postal services became more affordable, the anonymous St Valentine's Day card became possible. By the early 19th century, they became so popular that factories started to mass-produce them.

In 1847 following the English tradition, Esther Howland of Massachusetts, started producing cards using the newly available and much cheaper paper lace in the United States.

In 1913 Hallmark Cards produced their first Valentine and by the mid 1980s the commercialisation was really gathering pace. Noting the sales effect of the occasion on chocolate, flowers and cards, the diamond industry got involved, promoting St Valentine's Day as a time for giving jewellery.

Last year an estimated one billion St Valentine's Day cards were sent worldwide, making it the second most card-heavy celebration after Christmas.

Diamonds may well be a girl's best friend, but we have put together some ideas for romantic treats that don't need to cost a fortune and are a fun way to celebrate.

Top right: I love u balloon.
Bottom right: Love crackers.
Below: Valentine socks.
All these fun items can be bought for £1 from Poundland in Abingdon!

Photograph: Poundland

Photograph: Poundland

Photograph: Poundland

Photograph: Marks & Spencer

Limited Collection fab heart watch, £19.50, from Marks & Spencer

SWEET TREATS FOR VALENTINE'S DAY

THEY SAY that the way to a man's heart is food, so why not make your loved one a sweet treat this February 14th with these heart shaped Millionaires shortbread - crumbly biscuit sandwiched with caramel and drizzled with dark and white chocolate.

Makes 18 biscuits
Preparation time: minutes
Cooking time: minutes

Ingredients
125g (4½oz) butter, softened
55g (2oz) caster sugar
½tsp vanilla extract
140g (5oz) plain flour
Half a 397g can Carnation Caramel
55g (2oz) dark chocolate
55g (2oz) Nestlé Milkybar

Method
1. Preheat oven to 170°C, (150°C for fan ovens), Gas mark 4.
2. Cream butter and sugar with the vanilla until pale and fluffy. Add the flour and mix well. Chill the dough for 10 minutes.
3. Roll out on a floured surface to 3mm thickness and cut out biscuits using a 3cm heart shaped cookie cutter (it should make 36 hearts, if you keep rolling and cutting).
4. Transfer to parchment lined baking sheets and bake for 8 to 10 minutes.
5. Leave to cool.
6. To serve, spread some of the caramel onto half the biscuits and sandwich back together with the remaining biscuits. Melt the chocolate in separate bowls. Drizzle the chocolate over the biscuits and leave to set.
7. Enjoy with tea or coffee or pop one in your valentines' lunchbox for a special treat!

Tip
You can freeze the dough if you don't want to bake it all at once. Wrap tightly in a double layer of cling film – it will keep for about a month.

Need help giving up smoking?

START TO STOP

With your local NHS Stop Smoking Service

FREE advice and support in Oxfordshire for smokers who want to quit 0845 40 80 300

Oxfordshire Smoking Advice Service
Supporting people through the process of quitting

NHS SMOKEFREE

S&C Sales and Lettings successes on selling properties on the Leys!

Since our previous advert, John and Julie secured many suitable buyers for home owners on the Blackbird Leys and Greater Leys Estate.

Many home owners who had been on the market with other agents for a long period of time were feeling low coming to the end of 2010. However, we are proud to give our vendors a great start to their New Year in getting them MOVING! Prices are remaining healthy in the area and we require similar properties as we have buyers waiting to purchase in the area.

Max and Ioanna of Pegasus Road instructed Connells Estate Agents, to find a buyer for there home.

After a staggering 20 weeks on the market, they were so disappointed that their agent had not arranged a single viewing, no one had come to see there lovely home. They had enough!

After a call to S&C it didn't take long for Julie to place the property on the market and produce lots of potential buyers and within a few weeks a suitable buyer was secured, quickly and efficiently.

Call S&C Sales and Lettings now for us to 'GET YOU MOVING'!

rightmove.co.uk primelocation.com globrix. FindaProperty.com

S&C Sales & Lettings
138 Oxford Road, Cowley, Oxford, OX4 2DU

S&C

Call Julie or John on 01865 770008 to book your 'free valuation with no obligation,' let us GET YOU MOVING!

EVERYONE WELCOME!

What's on at The Leys Children's Centre

February 2011

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Cuddesdon Corner (Linked with Orchard Meadow School 01865 778609) For Mikko Enticknap 01865 773263 For Anne Wells and Valerie O'Malley Contact 01865 779615	**NEW!** **Signing Course*** Starting 28 February 9.30 am – 11.30 am Contact Anne Wells **Stay & Play for Babies, dads, mums & carers** 1.00 pm – 3.00pm Contact Mikko Enticknap **The Breastfeeding Café** For pregnant and feeding mums 1.00pm – 2.00pm Contact Camille Kalaja 0789 995 8316 **Literacy Class** 1.00 pm – 3.00pm * Contact Anne Wells **Legal Advice Direct** 1.00pm – 4.30pm Contact Valerie O'Malley to make an appointment **The Listening Centre** 12.30pm – 9.00pm Phone 01865 794794	**PEEP for 1s #** 9.30am – 10.30am Call 01865 395145 **Stay & Play with lunch** (small fee) 11.00am – 2.00pm including: **Speech & Language Advice available** 12.00pm – 1.00pm and **Nursery Nurse** Advice and information available on the 2nd Tuesday of each month. Starting 9 November 11.00am – 12.00pm **Job Centre Plus** 1.00pm – 2.00pm See Joumana at Cuddesdon Corner **The Listening Centre** 5.00pm – 9.00pm	**ESOL group*** 9.30am – 11.30am Contact Anne Wells **NEW!** **Smoking Cessation*** Starting 9 February 9.30 am – 11.30 am Contact Valerie O'Malley **Midwife Clinic** Post natal and baby checks, support and advice.12.30pm – 2.30pm Drop-in or phone 01865 221696 for an appointment **NEW!** **Birth preparation workshops** For mums and dads 2 and 9 February 5.00pm – 7.00pm Contact: Conroy 0777 540 7524 or Monika 07879 674 425 **The Listening Centre** 5.00pm – 9.00pm	**NEW!** **Aromatherapy*** Starting 13 January 9.30 am – 11.30 am Contact Anne Wells **NEW!** **NVQ Level 1 Child-care*** Starting 3 February 9.30 am – 12.30 pm Contact Anne Wells **Agnes Smith Advice Centre** (for advice on benefits, money advice and debt) 10.00am – 1.00pm. Contact Jackie Knight 01865 770206 Also for details of other drop-in sessions **Volunteer Training*** Starting 20 January 1.00 pm – 3.00 pm Contact Anne Wells **The Listening Centre** 5.00pm– 9.00pm	**Stay & Play with lunch** (small fee) 9.00am – 2.45pm Dads Worker available # For information on other PEEP groups in the area contact 01865 395145 **Saturday** **Dad's Zone** 10.00am – 1.30pm Contact Conroy Harris 0777 540 7524

Co-operative Nursery
Provides childcare on the Leys. 8.00am – 6.00pm, Monday – Friday.
For more information call 01865 401205
Additional childcare information available on a separate leaflet. Contact Valerie O'Malley on 01865 779615 for a copy.

COMING SOON:
- **More Cooking on a Budget**
- **Basic Maths**
- **Preparing for Work**
- **Basic Counselling skills**
- **Children are the Future**
- **Book Club**
- **Helping Your Child to Read**
- **HENRY**

For more details contact Anne Wells on 01865 779615

Orchard Meadow **01865 778609**		**Parents Coffee Morning** in the Parent Room 9.00am – 10.00am	**Baby PEEP** 1.30pm – 2.30pm Call 01865 395145		
Pegasus **01865 777175** Contact Rachel Walding	**Tatty Bumpkin Yoga** 2.00pm – 2.45pm		**NEW! Family Links** Starting 12 January 9.00am – 11.00am **Stay and Play** 9.15am – 11.30am **Stay and Play** 12.45pm – 3.00pm	**Saturday** **Maluchy – Little Ones** 10.00am – 11.30am. Call Agata on 07874 187 704	**Stay and Play** 1.00pm – 3.00pm
Windale **01865 777796** Contact Nicky Solomon	**Stay and Play** 9.30am – 11.00am	**Leys Childminder Drop-In** 12.00pm – 2.30pm Contact Maureen Sim 07877 59 6321	**Sewing Circle*** 9.00am – 11.00am	**PEEP for 1s** 9.30am – 10.30am Call 01865 395145	**Parents Coffee Morning** 9.00am – 11.00am
Leys Health Centre	**Infant Feeding Talks** For pregnant women 12.00pm To book an appointment contact Camille Kalaja on 01865 788688	**Baby Massage** for babies from 8 weeks old 1.00pm – 2.00pm Contact Linda Picton 01865 788688			
The Dovecote Nightingale Avenue	**Baby PEEP** 9.30am – 10.30am **PEEP for 2s** 1.30 – 2.30pm Call 01865 395145	**Sparklers** Every other Tuesday 10.00am – 11.30am Contact Ruth Donaldson 01865 779615	**PEEP for 2s** 9.30am – 10.30am Call 01865 395145		

***CHILDCARE AVAILABLE**

OXFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL www.oxfordshire.gov.uk Working for you
Sure Start

Find more information on our website: www.theleyschildrenscentre.org
The Leys Children's Centre, Cuddesdon Corner, 61–63 Cuddesdon Way, Blackbird Leys OX4 6SB

Children's Centres for families in Oxfordshire

OXFORD BROOKES UNIVERSITY

Thanks to Oxford Brookes University for sponsoring this page. If you are interested in studying at Oxford Brookes please contact Peter Knipp on 01865 484886 or wknipp@brookes.ac.uk

Leys Learning

Young people at the heart of project

THE Leys CDI/YP2 project has been awarded a grant for £372,000 to provide weekly afterschool activities and vocational courses designed to help young people back in to education and work.

The three year youth participatory project which began in December 2009, gives young people the chance to get involved in the running and decision making of the project, and learn how to plan and budget for new activities.

If you're aged between nine and 25 and you would like to become a member of the youth management committee or take part in courses or activities call in to the Blackbird Leys Community Centre in the Glow Hall or check out the project on Facebook (The Leys CDI) or ring 395927.

Activities that have taken place include a film project, weekly drum workshops, a mini film workshop, after school club, Saturday youth club, table tennis club, DJ mixing workshops, a soundtrack project, first aid course, and a graffiti project.

Courses kick off at Leys News

THE latest Community Journalism course is now up and running at The Leys News offices in Kingfisher Green. Thanks to funding from Oxford Brookes University, we are able to offer people from the local community the free training course. Run by Leys News Editor Sarah Edwards, the course give people the chance to find out more about working on a community newspaper, as well as helping them to improve their literacy, listening and communication skills.

Due to the continued success at Leys News, we are now helping to manage the production of Rose Hill News, and later this year Oxford Brookes have secured funding for us to also provide training to a group of residents in East Oxford who are keen to start their own newspaper.

Editor, Sarah Edwards said: "To be able to offer free training to people in the community is brilliant and I am delighted that East Oxford also wants to start their own newspaper. Community Journalism courses really give people the skills and confidence they need to report on events in their local community and get involved with a valuable local project."

Community Journalism training courses include modules on writing and interview practice, how newspapers are designed and how to spot a good story, as well as photography and the role of community newspapers in local areas.

Hope on the horizon for Starlight

A LOCAL textile trading company has thrown The Starlight Project a lifeline that could mean it can continue with its valuable work in the community.

Sue Funge from the project announced last week that Reyclocal has offered to help them raise much needed funds, and people on the Leys are being asked to support the initiative by donating unwanted goods.

Sue and Glen Berley set up Starlight two years ago to offer learning opportunities for people living on the Leys. Sue said: "By the public donating unwanted clothing, coats, footwear, handbags, belts, soft toys, CDs, DVDs, mobile phones and console and computer games, Recyclocal has agreed to pledge up to £550 per tonne to support Starlight, schools, clubs and other organisations locally.

"Four years before we set up Starlight we had developed a number of Open College Network accredited courses and we wanted to be able to offer these for free to local residents. The courses are designed to develop or deepen people's skills to enable them to move forward positively either into work or further learning opportunities."

Starlight has always had strong links with the local FE college, Oxford and Cherwell Valley College, Oxford Brookes and Ruskin who all recognise the value of Starlight's courses as a first step into learning.

Sue added: "This funding could provide the project with a much needed cash injection and mean that the project could continue to run beyond March this year. We urge everyone to help with this campaign by donating their unwanted goods."

For further information and to arrange for collection please ring 01865 776691.

Oxford Brookes wins again in University Challenge

OXFORD BROOKES UNIVERSITY defeated Christ's College Cambridge 185–160 in an exciting quarter final of the popular TV quiz show University Challenge.

Out of 100 teams that applied for the programme, Oxford Brookes is now one of eight remaining universities in the show that pits the brightest students in the country against one another.

The team are: captain Tony McLarin (History), Richard Williams (Architecture), Sarah Johnson, (Mathematical Sciences) and Austin Sherlaw-Johnson, studying for a PhD in Music. They are coached by Dr. Ian Bayley, senior lecturer in computing.

In the first round the Oxford Brookes team scraped a win against Cardiff University by 220-210. In the second round they thrashed the University of the Arts London with an impressive 320 points to 100.

Dr.Bayley said of the latest victory: "This is a great result against one of the country's top universities and it shows how incredibly talented our students can be."

Contestant Richard Williams added: "It has been very exciting to have been involved in University Challenge and it was a great achievement to beat one of the top Cambridge colleges on Monday. It is the first time the University has been so successful on the show and hopefully we have shown that Brookes can compete against the very best."

Because of a quirk in the contest, teams must win two quarter-final matches. So Brookes must win one more match before progressing to the semi-finals.

Watch the team's next match on Monday February 7 on BBC2 at 8pm.

News from BLITZ

COMPUTER TRAINING FOR BEGINNERS: STILL FREE WITH BLITZ!

- **Would you like to improve your IT skills?**
- **Would this improve your work prospects?**
- **Would this help you get a Job?**

If you have none, or very little computer skills let us help you gain the confidence with the possibility to progress to your first IT qualification. You are not alone, do it now, it is still free!

Computer maintenance Course: Understanding your computer in the home and work environment. First line support, hardware, software, file management, trouble shooting, upgrades. (You will require some basic IT skills to access this course.)

Enrol now for courses starting soon! For more details phone John on 01865 714492

Drop in Times
Free access to the internet for adults:
Monday: *10am–3pm*
Tuesday: *12.30pm–3pm*
Friday: *10am–12pm*

Sponsored by Oxford Brookes University

The Blackbird Leys IT Hub
Ring John on 01865 714492 or email blitzithub@yahoo.co.uk for further details. Or visit him during office hours at the Leys Community Centre, Blackbird Leys Road.

Back to work with Scout Enterprises

FREE training to help people get back to work is available at Blackbird Leys Community centre.

The training helps with everything from applying for jobs to interview technique, basic IT skills and confidence building, and is run by Scout Enterprises based in Cowley.

Naveed Ramzan from Scout said: "We run an Employability Skills Programme that helps with adult numeracy and literacy as well as basic job search skills, and this runs three days a week. The other training we offer is Sector Skills Support and the principle of this course is to make people ready for work. We can give people all the skills they need in order to get a job. This is a 13 week course that runs for five hours three times a week."

The training that Naveed offers includes role play for interview practice and confidence building and there is plenty of help available for people who are struggling to find the right job to apply for.

Naveed added: "All the training that we offer is free and we can also arrange work placements, help people update their CVs and give people access to the internet."

For more information ring 01865 395544.

Children's Page

Watching Wildlife

THE BIGGEST SURVEY of wildlife in UK schools started this week as the RSPB marks ten years of the event. With over 2,000 schools expected to take part, the RSPB's Big Schools' Birdwatch has helped to track bird populations in schools over the last decade.

Since its launch in 2002, the longest running wildlife survey in schools has inspired nearly half a million children and teachers about the wildlife outside their classroom windows. More than 70 different species have been recorded in school grounds, ranging from starlings and house sparrows, to kestrels and even pheasants.

Over the last ten years, Big Schools' Birdwatch has highlighted the winners and losers in the school bird world. The starling held the top spot until 2009 when it was knocked off by the blackbird. Last year, 85% of schools reported seeing blackbirds with an average of 4.3 being seen at each school, making it the most common visitor to school grounds.

The survey has also shown the increases in black-headed gull and carrion crow numbers and the declines of the starling and house sparrow.

Laura Bowman, RSPB Big Schools' Birdwatch project manager, said: "For the past ten years, we've been asking young people to count the birds in their school grounds. The Big Schools' Birdwatch has allowed thousands of children to be inspired about the wildlife outside their classroom windows.

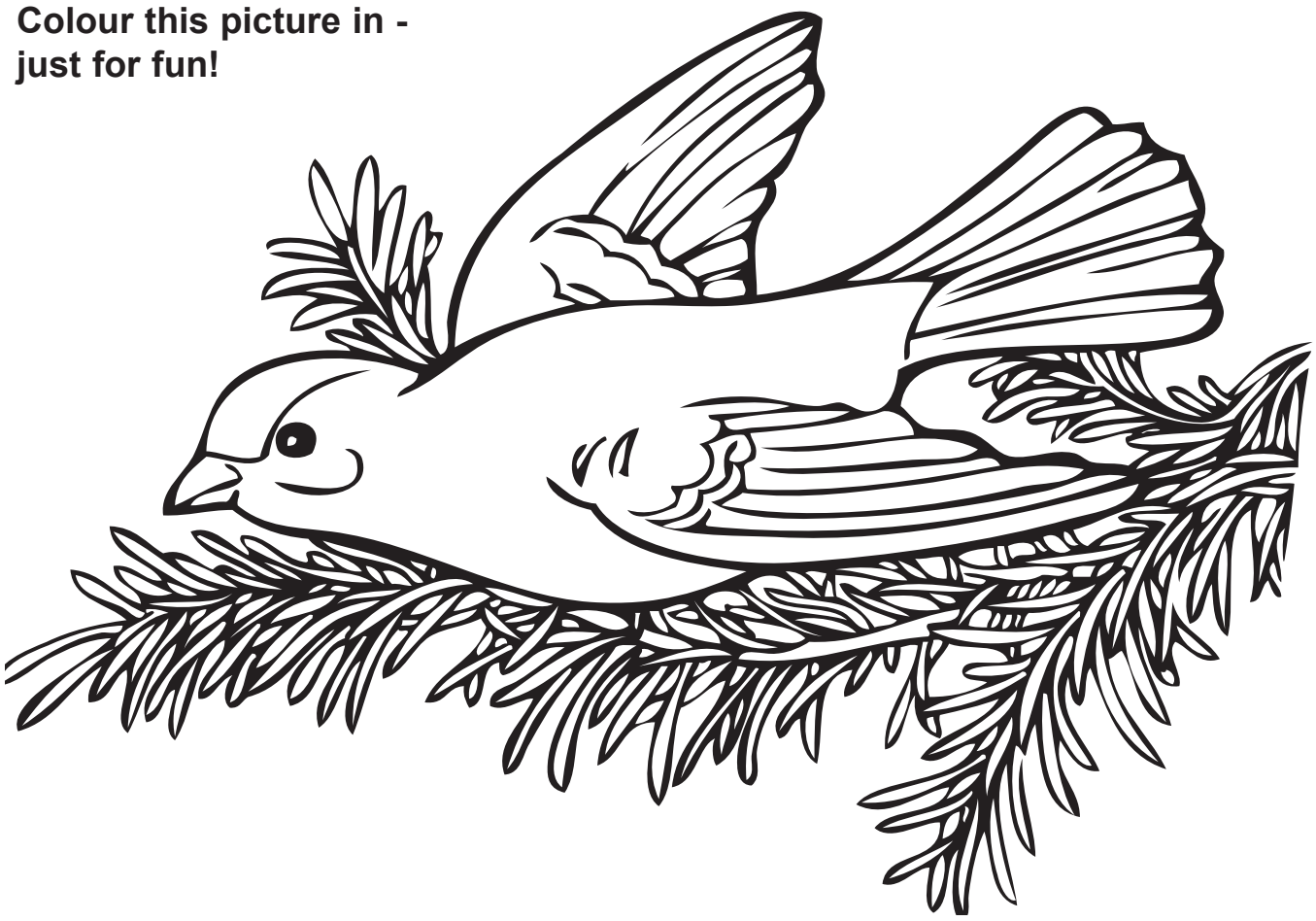
"The results help the RSPB to build a picture of birds visiting school grounds and the population changes they are experiencing."

Running from 24 January - 4 February, the activity asks children and their teachers to spend an hour counting the birds in their school grounds. Over recent years, nearly 100,000 young people have taken part each year.

Laura added: "Schools can provide excellent habitats for a range of different birds and species like gulls and crows are seen in much larger numbers in schools than in gardens. Playing fields offer a surprising amount of food for birds to forage for and species like gulls gather in groups and stamp the ground to bring invertebrates to the surface, as well as cleaning up the crisps and other treats dropped at playtime."

See what birds you can spot in your garden.

Colour this picture in - just for fun!



The adventures of Bertha the Bus

Part 1: Introducing Bertha and her friends

Story by Alan Witton

Bertha is a little red bus and she lives in a brick garage with three other buses in a little village called Longhampton. Next door to the garage is the Manager's house; he lives upstairs with his family, and downstairs there is an office where the Manager looks after Bertha and the other buses, decides what routes to send them on, and looks after people who come in to ask for timetables or to book for coach tours.

Bertha's friends in the garage are Carrie the coach, who is very proud that she's been on a tour to Italy (and very sad that the Manager doesn't run that tour any more); Derek the double-decker, who takes the children to school in the next village; and Eli, a very old bus who doesn't get around very much now, but the Manager has had him so long he doesn't want to say goodbye.

Derek is the only double-decker, with an "upstairs" and a "downstairs" so he can fit more children in. He has to sleep out in the yard at night, because the garage roof is too low for him. "But I don't mind" he says. "I can take it. It would be a shame to leave Bertha or Carrie outdoors and spoil their nice paintwork; but I'm old, and I've seen a lot of service, and I don't mind." Sometimes Bertha and Carrie giggle when he says this (have you ever heard a bus giggle? You should), but sometimes they feel sorry for him, especially when it's raining.

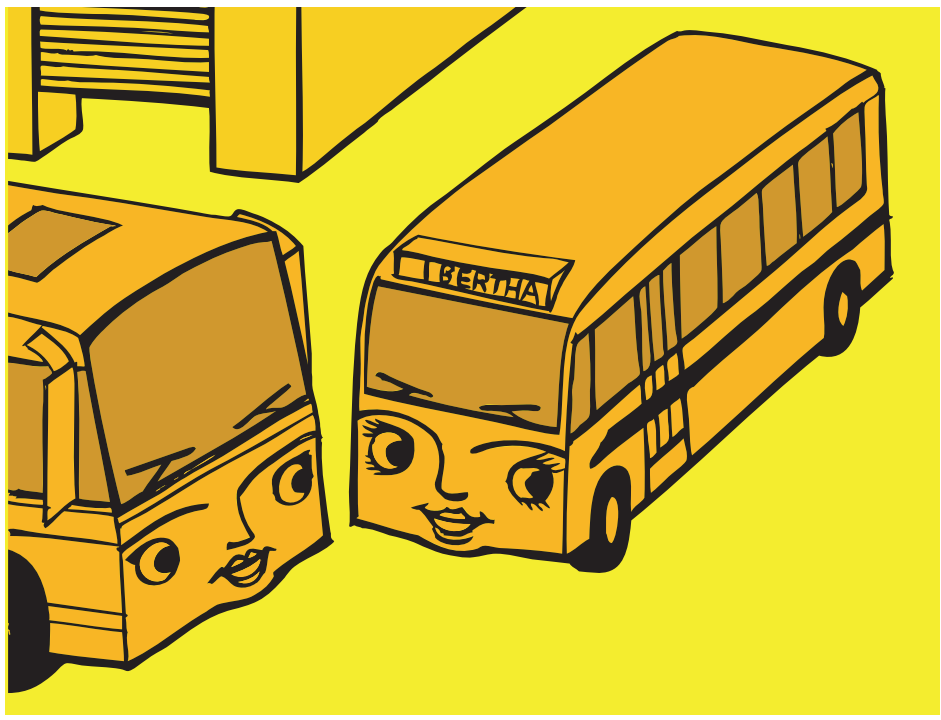
Bertha and Carrie are friends and they live next to each other inside the garage; sometimes they talk till far into the night. Eli is old and a little deaf, so they don't disturb him; and Derek sleeps very soundly out in the yard (though I have heard it said that he snores terribly).

Bertha's usual job is to go round the six or seven villages close by and take people to work. Then she goes back to pick up the shoppers and take them to the nearest market town. Every day a different town has its market day, so every day Bertha has a different route; she sees lots of countryside and she enjoys it.

Bertha's Driver is called Fred, and he lives in a cottage just down the road from the bus garage. Fred and Bertha nearly always stay together for their day's work. Fred looks after Bertha really carefully, topping her up with water to stop her boiling, checking her tyres, sweeping her inside after a hard day's work, and washing her outside with a hosepipe.

If Fred is ill or on holiday, Carrie's Driver, Albert, takes over. He doesn't like Bertha very much, because she bumps and bounces more than Carrie does; but he can't drive Carrie round the villages, because Carrie is too long to go round the sharpest corners.

Usually Fred collects people's fares from his driving seat. He has a ticket machine on a desk next to his seat, and people pay their fares as they get on. In the morning, though, when Bertha takes the people to work, and in the evening when she brings them home again, there are so many people that it would be very slow if they all had to pay Fred; so the Manager's son, Simon, takes Fred's ticket machine and walks round



Bertha taking the money as Fred drives along.

On Saturdays Fred drives Bertha to Milltown, a big city twenty miles away. Bertha likes this route best of all. She doesn't like the smoke, or the dirt, or the traffic in Milltown, of course; Bertha is a country girl at heart and she likes a quiet life. But when they go to Milltown, they spend a lot of time parked in the Bus Station, where Bertha can talk to all kinds of buses she doesn't see the rest of the week:- big green double-deckers of Milltown Council, blue buses from the other side of town, and white coaches that might have come from the other end of the country.

Bertha likes most of all to hear what's going on in London. She's never been to London, though Carrie has been there and talks about it almost every night. When a white coach from London comes in, Bertha tries to get close enough to ask for the news. Some of the white coaches are very stuck-up and won't speak to a plain country bus like Bertha; but some of them are friendly and will talk to her for hours, though they speak with such funny accents that Bertha can hardly understand them.

Follow the story in the next issue of Leys News.

Arts and Culture Focus

An Ethiopian adventure

Natty Mark Samuels who runs the hugely successful African School, has just returned from a trip to Ethiopia.

LAKE TANA. The largest lake in Ethiopia and the source of the Blue Nile. Central to the lives of the people of Bahir Dar, Ethiopia's seventh largest town.

On my last day in Ethiopia, I sat blessed by the sun, under an awesome fig tree, on the lakeside, relaxing in sweet reminiscence.

Cycling up to the Blue Nile, weaving in and out with the three-wheeled taxis, sharing the road with the cattle, letting the goats and their herder pass by.

Back around the lake, I bought lentil samosas called sambuusa, from two boys. Passing a marshy area, I stood and watched a farmer, tending to his mangoes and papayas.

Onwards to a little wooded area, where a musician in a wheelchair, playing a traditional harp called begena, entertained those who gathered around.

Past a spot where people bathed. Soap and laughter in the water.

To where the man was making a tankwa, a canoe-like craft, made from papyrus reeds. I was told it took a day to make the smaller ones, two days for the larger. They have been making them that way since time began.

The children, diving off rocks and splashing around. The adults chatting around them.

A solitary fisherman in his tankwa, checking his nets, watched only by the pelicans and I.

The journey across the lake to the medieval island monasteries on Christmas Day, with Ibises flying above me. Near the Debre Maryam Monastery isle, where the lake becomes the river, I saw the heads of two hippopotamuses.

I had a chat with some guys under a tree of shade, speaking of Ethiopian history: buying drinks from a lakeside bar.

I wish I could have sat longer under that fig tree. But it was time to go. So I searched along the bank, finding pieces of volcanic rock to keep as souvenirs, alongside the mementos, sparkling in my head.

Family friendly activities at the Pitt Rivers Museum

The Pitt Rivers Museum, famous for its outstanding collection of artefacts from many cultures around the world, past and present, offers a regular programme of free activities. Here is a brief summary of what's on over the next couple of months.

Free Family Friendly Fun: Every Sunday 2pm-4pm in the Pitt Rivers and the Oxford University Museum of Natural History. Activity backpacks, sorting boxes, trails, colouring sheets and craft activities.

Saturday 5 February: Lyra's Furs. Discover the collection of Arctic clothing that inspired Philip Pullman. Follow in Lyra's footsteps and prepare for a journey north.

19 February: Gallery talk: Sounds of Africa. An illustrated talk on African musical instruments. Buzzing vulture quills, rasping voice disguisers and bubbling mbiras made from umbrella spokes. An illustrated talk with sound examples.

Monday 21 to Wednesday 23 February: Half-term Activities: Dinosaurs and Dragon Hunters. Have fun with our famous dinosaurs and discover wonderful armour to defend yourself against giant beasts.

Saturday 5 March: Brilliant Body Arts. Be inspired by the collections to create your own body ornament. Discover more about the Museum's recent Body Arts Project.

Saturday 12 March: Wow! How? Our eighth super science fair. Make, test, explore, and explode with excitement at our annual bonanza of experiments and hands-on fun.10am-4pm. Ages 8 upwards.

For more information call 01865 270927, or see their website: www.prm.ox.ac.uk/

Dancing in the streets

DANCIN' OXFORD is celebrating its fifth birthday this year with a festival packed full of lively, colourful and exciting dance performances and events

The event has received funding from Arts Council England for a total of £25,025 to support the festival which runs from 19 February until 19 March.

This year's highlights include a visit to Oxford by the French aerial dance company Retouramont who will be performing against the walls of Oxford Castle. This is the first time that Oxford will have seen work of this nature - fusing aerial dance, live sound and projection.

The popular Dance-A-Thon is back and has doubled in size with four days of taster sessions which will enable anyone, novice or experienced to try out new dance styles. Each session lasts 45 minutes and will offer a taste of one of 23 different styles of dance.

Pegasus Theatre will host 14 events and the new Festival Club, free to Festival Pass Holders (£1), with a resident DJ. Among the shows performing will be renowned professional companies Phoenix Dance, State of Emergency, Company Chameleon and the much awaited return of Tavaziva Dance Company.

The dance festival also profiles and celebrates the work of Oxford-based professional dance artists, youth and community dance groups.

Councillor Mark Lygo, Board Member for Sport, Play and School Liaison, said: "The Dance Festival is a great event that has a lot of support both nationally and locally.

"This year's event is bigger and better than previous years and includes events at the brand new Pegasus Theatre.

"I hope people will enjoy the many talented dancers at the series of events that are part of the Dance Festival as well taking part in the dance sessions."

The festival is co-ordinated by Oxford City Council in partnership with Oxford Playhouse and Pegasus Theatre.

Look out for a full programme at www.dancinoxford.co.uk or call Claire Thompson, Arts Officer on 01865 252820 for more information.

The Smallest Show In The World at the coolest cinema in Oxford!

By Marie Jones

THE Ultimate Picture Palace on Jeune Street, off Cowley Road, is celebrating its 100th anniversary in style by inviting local residents to attend a free film showing.

Taken over by Philippa Farrow and Jane Derricott in July 2009, the cinema stays true to its tradition of showing cult and classic films, late night showings as well as current releases

The two women have breathed new life into the cinema by installing pink plush seats and getting an alcohol licence so you can enjoy a glass of wine with the movie, and not pay £10 for a popcorn and drinks combo! Philippa said: "We are the only independent cinema in Oxford and have true independence."

The Ultimate Picture Palace is available for hire for private parties, corporate events or special requests, and still runs on 35mm film, which means they can build in intermissions for long movies. They reduced the seating capacity and installed new seats so customers have extra legroom - according to Jane: "It's better to have fewer people sitting in comfort rather than trying to cram them in."

To celebrate the cinema's centenary, the Ultimate Picture Palace is inviting everyone to attend a free film show on Thursday 24 February on a first-come first-served basis - this will consist of a screening of 'The Smallest Show On Earth' as well as a couple of old silent movies. Showings will run for two hours, starting at 4.00pm, 6.30pm and 9.00pm (invitation only).

The Smallest Show on Earth is a 1957 British comedy starring Bill Travers and Peter Sellers with Sid James in an early supporting role, about a couple who inherit a rundown cinema nicknamed 'the fleapit' - no comparison to our beloved UPP of course, especially not with the new pink comfy seats!

For more information on the Ultimate Picture Palace and the 100th anniversary celebrations, visit www.ultimatepicturepalace.co.uk or telephone 01865 245288.

Poetry Corner

A Western Front

by Danny Williams

You have a life here in the western world, life exists so please do take it, even though creatively you might not make it.

Through birth on this mother of pearl that is our world, mother earth your place of birth.

Where dirt's unearthed, people die of thirst and hunger.

Arms deployed, lives destroyed, so lets hope you can cope, life's a lottery not a piece of your mum's best pottery.

Even in this western world you live your life at your peril, spending more to get the best is old school man, just get what's less and still fits you best.

Give up all your local grievances, live your life as one pleases.

In the western world you have clothes, you have some food, and you have to cope though you are mostly broke.

Penury and destitution isn't western evolution thus it's a failure that has failed us retrogrades us, and has pained us.

Future of The Gatehouse

A CAFE for homeless people in Oxford will have to relocate because of financial pressures on the city council.

Oxford City Council has taken the decision to issue notice for the return of Northgate Hall. The property in St Michael's Street has been home to the Gatehouse café for homeless and other vulnerable people since 1991.

For nearly twenty years the charity has offered an open door to the homeless community, six evenings a week. It has provided the base for a volunteer-led initiative, involving many hundreds of people of all ages and backgrounds from across the county. Meanwhile, other users of the building have left, leaving the premises seriously under-occupied.

Councillor Joe McManners, Board Member for Housing, said: "The Gatehouse has provided a valued service to many hundreds of people over the years and it is regrettably that we have had to make this difficult decision.

"As a City Council we will carry out our best endeavours to help the Gatehouse find alternative premises."

Andrew Smith, Project Director at The Gatehouse, said: "The trustees of the Gatehouse recognise the dilemma in which the council finds itself, and are appreciative of the generous notice given. We ask for every effort to be made by the many supporters of the project across the whole community to identify a suitable building which might be made available."

Anyone who is aware of an appropriate opportunity should contact the Project Director, Andrew W Smith on 01865 792999 or atadmin@oxfordgatehouse.org. The Gatehouse was registered as a charity in 1991 and has been supported by Oxford City Council.

Blackbird Leys Leisure Centre

LET'S SPRING INTO FITNESS!

REVITALISE flagging energy levels, tone up and get fit with one of the new classes on offer at Blackbird Leys Leisure Centre this year. Available classes include the very popular Zumba dance sessions and spin in the brand new spin studio, plus established favourites like pilates, yoga, step, and circuits.

Yannce Reid, a fitness instructor at Blackbird Leys Leisure Centre, says: "There are so many different classes that you can take part in that you should be able to find something to suit you.

"Here at Blackbird Leys we not only have the great new spin studio but we also have nearly 40 other classes to choose from including; Pure Step, Aerobic Nix, Body Balance, Body Combat, Leg/Bums/Tums, Zumba, 100% Burn, Aerotone, Circuits and a new Boxercise class on Fridays."

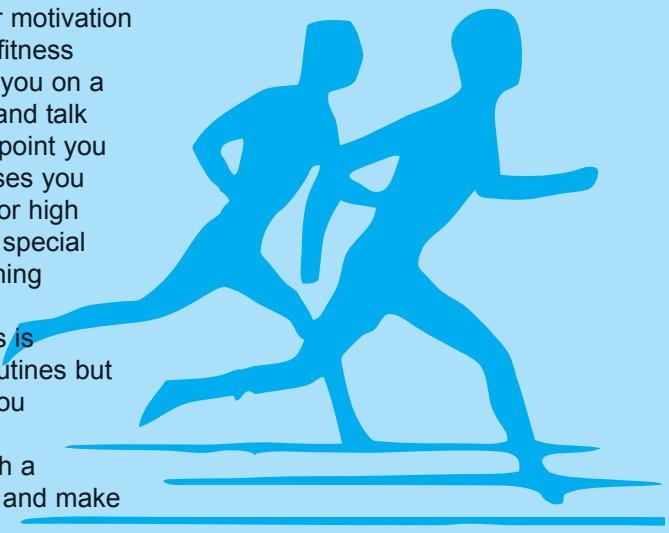
Councillor Mark Lygo, Board Member for Sport, Play and School Liaison added: "Everyone makes New Year resolutions to keep fit and with all these classes you should be able to keep to it.

"Taking part in some form of moderate exercise and maintaining a healthy diet will help build a healthy lifestyle for you."

To kick start your new fitness routine and make sure your resolutions don't slide along the way Yannce has some helpful tips.

Tips to get fit

- Focus on you - focus on your own reason for change like losing weight gained at Christmas or improving energy levels. A wedding, holiday, Valentines date or entering a charity fundraising event like a swimathon may prove the extra incentive or just simply because you want to feel good.
- Set yourself some short, medium and long term targets. Make sure that these are achievable. An overall goal could involve playing football for a team with a short term target of joining a local club, medium goal of training twice a week and long term goal of playing a match in three months time.
- Choose something you are interested in that will enable you to keep your motivation high. The personal trainers and fitness instructors will be happy to take you on a tour of your local leisure centre and talk about what's on offer. They can point you in the right direction for the classes you may enjoy. It's not all treadmills or high octane fitness classes there are special interest sports and gentle stretching exercises like pilates.
- Remember the key to success is variation, not only in exercise routines but in what you eat. Variety keeps you interested!
- Find a friend - working out with a "buddy" will keep you motivated and make you more committed.
- Consider a team sport, it's a great way to get fit while increasing your social circles.
- Trainers and loose clothes are fine for most activities - you don't need to buy anything special.
- Speak to a trainer for advice to reduce the risk of injury and look at your medical history.
- Exercise is a positive thing, not only can it help to reduce coronary heart disease and diabetes, it can help build your community.
- Remember that using your local centre isn't all about training to run a marathon, it can be a fun social event and can improve self esteem and confidence.



Pegasus Theatre highlights Oxford talent

A GROUP of young people based at the Pegasus Theatre has been programming a series of monthly events to showcase the talents of performers under the age of 21 on the venue's Pullman Stage. The latest in February and March will feature young bands from East Oxford.

For these events the programming group has been working in partnership with the music project at the Ark-T centre and with St. Gregory The Great Catholic School.

The Ark-T music project based in Cowley has been working with young performers for more than ten years, with its recording studio and regular live gigs becoming a respected launching pad for new musical discoveries across a wide range of genres. The night, run by a team of young volunteers will showcase some of the emerging singers, bands and MCs coming through the project.

The line will include singing duo Volume, indie band Thy Little Reds, MC Jayaand Ebony.

Ark-T volunteer Sarah Greenaway, who is one of a team who have programmed the night and are helping to prepare the young acts says "The Ark-T & Pegasus both provide a number of opportunities to young people, giving them the chance to showcase and build on talent and confidence. The mix of these two establishments is an extremely positive movement, one which will undoubtedly inspire more young artists in fulfilling their potential."

S & R CHILDS
INDEPENDENT FUNERAL SERVICES

Pharmacy House, 69 London Road, Headington, Oxford OX3 9AA **Tel: (01865) 427272**

10 The Parade, Oxford Road, Kidlington, Oxford OX5 1EE **Tel: (01865) 378888**

142 Oxford Road, Cowley, Oxford OX4 2DZ **Tel: (01865) 714007**

4 Elms Parade, Botley, Oxford OX2 9LG **Tel: (01865) 245464**

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CLASSIFIEDS

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Hampden House Business Centre
Serviced offices, virtual offices and meeting rooms available to help your business make the right impression. For viewings call Chris Williams on 01865 893200 chris@jennings.co.uk www.hampden-house.co.uk

ENTERTAINMENT

Ouch! - the band
Rock, soul and pop for a great party, wedding or corporate event. If you're looking for great atmosphere, great music, a bit of a sing along and just a cracking night out you'll love the Ouch band.
Contact: Charlie 07710 970992 www.ouchband.co.uk

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Reach new customers in your local area with a Leys News Classified ad. Advertise your business from as little as £10 per issue (when booking for 12 months). *To book your space ring Naomi on 01865 711756*

What's on in the Leys

A quick guide to what's available locally. If you have a service or event you'd like to include, please ring 01865 711756.

Starlight Community project
Some of the courses and groups on offer:
● A course for women - gain self confidence, develop skills for work or further learning
● IT courses ● Dad's group
● Black British History course
● Parent Forum ● Get ready for work course ● Literacy & Numeracy skills ● Group for familes with black children of mixed heritage
☎ 01865 778514
www.starlightproject.co.uk

ADVICE

Agnes Smith Advice Centre
Gives free independent and impartial advice. Drop-in sessions are in the centre on Mondays 2.00–4.00pm and Fridays 10.00am–12.00pm.
Also in the Farmhouse on Tuesdays and Thursdays at 10am–12pm. ☎ 01865 770206

CHILDREN

Baby Cafe: Cuddesdon Corner Family Centre, Fridays, 10.30am - 12.30pm. www.thebabycafe.org
☎ Carole Roberts, 01865 788688

Oxfordshire (The Rifles) Battalion Army Cadet Force
Sandy Lane West. Boys and Girls ages 13 to 18. Thursdays 7.30–9.30pm. ☎ 01869 259681

Blackbird Leys Youth Centre
Blackbird Leys Road. Variety of activities & advice for young people.
☎ 01865 772886.

Brownies: Thursdays, Holy Family Church Hall. Gill Manning,
☎ 01865 770959

Dovecote - Afterschool Club
Mondays – Thursdays, 3.15pm – 5.00pm, £1.30 per session.
☎ 01865 712299

Maluchy: group for Polish speaking families with children ages 0–5. Saturdays, Cuddesdon Corner family centre. 9.45–11.15am
☎ 07874187704

35th Oxford Scout Group
☎ Duncan Bowler, 0776 6293353
duncan@35thoxford.com

Rainbows: Girls aged 5 to 7. Fridays during term time, 5.30–6.30pm, at the Holy Family Church Hall on Cuddesdon Way.
☎ Laura Turner, 07787528120

Leys Kiddie Club: In the Dovecote Family Drop-in Room, Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays & Fridays, 9.30am–2.30pm. £1. Price includes a hot drink and a soft drink for children.

EDUCATION

Able Centre
Free courses in Maths and English.
☎ Annette 776334

Blitz IT Courses
IT for beginners, internet, email, file management, PC maintenance and more. ☎ 01865 714492

Oxford Women's Training Scheme ☎ 01865 550227
hmcluckie@ocuc.ac.uk

LEISURE

Irish dancing. Sacred Heart Hall. Weds & Thurs, 5pm.
Boxing training. Youth Centre at the Leys Linx, Blackbird Leys Rd. Tues & Thurs 7.30–9.00pm.
☎ 01865 715815.

BL Swimming Pool
Blackbird Leys Road. General swimming times are Mon & Fri 5.45–6.45pm, and Sat & Sun 11.15am–1.00pm. Thursdays, 12–1pm, parent and toddlers. Saturdays and Sundays, 2.30–3.30pm, families only.
☎ 01865 467042.

Blackbird Leys Leisure Centre
● Bouncy fun for under 5s, Mon 10.30–12pm
● Body Conditioning, Mon 10–11am
● Tae Kwon Do, Tue 6–7pm
● Pilates Beginners, Tue 7–7.45pm
● Aerotone, Wed 6–7pm
● Tae kwon Do, Thu 5–6pm
● Circuit Training, Thu 7.05–7.55pm
● Boxercise, Fri 10–11am
● Step & Tone, Fri 6–7pm
All activites cost from £1.20

NETWORKING

Leys Women's Business Network. For women who have or are interested in starting their own business, however big or small. First Tuesday of the month, 7.30– 9.00pm. £1 suggested donation. 26 Kingfisher Green
☎ 01865 395960

OLDER PEOPLE

Prime Time Over 50s group, Wednesdays, 10.30-3.30, at Blackbird Leys Leisure Centre, Pegasus Road (£1.50).
Keep fit, bingo, indoor bowls, speakers, activities and trips.
☎ 07534 740589

Samba Dance for Over 50s
Dance to infectious rhythms, shake it up and let it all out! Samba is an Afro-Brazilian dance form danced in carnivals in Brazil. Back in town due to popular demand! All over 50s welcome, no experience necessary. Weekly sessions begin on Tuesday 14 September, 10-11am. FREE
☎ 01865 252820

Golden Circle
☎ Bernard Tucker, 460592

Silver Circle
☎ 435954 (Prime time tel. via Blackbird Leys Leisure Centre)

Gardening Club for the over 55s
3 February - Gardening quiz and talk by Reg Curnock about allotment gardening. Meetings are on first Thursday of the month. All welcome.
The Clockhouse, Long Ground, Greater Leys ☎ 01865 395908
Meets first Thursday of each month, 2-4pm. £2, includes refreshments.

Monday lunch club
☎ Anne Appleton, 422231

Leys Community Church Over-60s Club ☎ Keith Templar, 715815

The Clockhouse
Activities, Friendship, Learning and Fun for the over 50s.
The Clockhouse, Long Ground, Greater Leys, OX4 7FX
☎ 01865 395908

Line dancing for the 50s.
Monday 14 Feb, 1.30–3.30pm. £1.50.

Yoga for the over 50s.
Tuesdays, 10 - 11am. £2.

Crafts group for over 50s.
Wednesdays, 11am–12.30pm. £1.

Tai Chi for over 50s - Thursdays 10–11am. £2. Graceful, slow-moving exercise.

Creative Crafts. Try lots of different crafts and take home what you make. £2. ☎ 395908 for details of day/time.

Singing for fun for over 50s.
Tuesdays 1, 8 and 15 Feb, 1.30–3.30pm. FREE. People who think they can't sing a speciality! Very friendly group.

Computer course for over 50s.
FREE. Learn at your own pace with the Clockhouse IT Project Group. Complete beginners very welcome. ☎ 07962 887379

New! Over 50s Drop-in Advice Session at the Clockhouse
FREE confidential help with benefits, consumer, debt and housing issues.
Last Monday of every month 10am–12.30pm.
Next date is Monday 28 February. Outreach session run by Agnes Smith Advice Centre.

WELLBEING

Survivors
Fridays and Saturdays, Blackbird Leys Community Centre,10.30pm – 3.30pm. A self-help group of people who use or have used Mental health Services, working together to get support for, to share experiences and to press for greater awareness of the needs of survivors.
☎ 07729 581975

The Listening Centre
A counselling service for Blackbird Leys and Oxford. Cuddesdon Corner Family Centre.
☎ 01865 794794

Slimming World
Every Thursday, 5.15pm & 7.00pm, Leisure Centre, Pegasus Road. ☎ Gill, 01865 730009

CHURCH NEWS

Leys Community Church

☎ Richard & Kate Colbrook, 01865 714153
Meets on Sundays, 3.30pm at the Church of the Holy Family. Meetings include special activities for children and young people.

The Church of the Holy Family

☎ Rev David Parry, 01865 778728
& Rev Adam Stevenson, 01865 714163
www.holyfamilybbl.co.uk
Eucharist: Every Sunday, 10am, with children's activities.
Timeout: Reflective evening worship. Most Sundays, 6.30pm.
Church Office Hour: Mondays (except bank holidays) at 6.30–7.30pm. For hall bookings, wedding arrangements and enquiries.
Fellowship for Bilbe: Study, discussion and prayer. Most Wednesdays at 7.30pm. During December there will be an Advent theme.

Sacred Heart Catholic Church

Balfour Road, Blackbird Leys (car park in Poulton Place)
☎ Phone the church office 01865 776903, for all enquiries, baptisms, and next year's First Holy Communions, etc.
Sunday Masses: 9.30am, with music and children's liturgy; 12noon in Portuguese; and at 6.00pm.

YOUR LOCAL REPRESENTATIVES

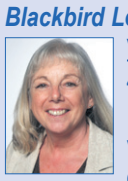
Parish Council

Chairman: Gordon Roper; **Vice Chair**: Gerry Webb; **Non-position holders**: Anne Booker, Rae Humberstone (*see City Council section below*), Chris Ha ian Lester, Tanya Prescott, Cyril Martin, Sheila Smith, Pat Stannard.

For further details telephone 01865 716943 during office hours of 9am–5pm, Monday to Friday. Send mail to Parish Council 13 Bailey Road, Oxford, OX4 3HU.

Oxford City Council

Blackbird Leys Ward



Val Smith – *Labour*
4 Flaxfield Road, OX4 6QD
☎ 07767 446051
valsmith@gmail.com
or cllrvsmith@oxford.gov.uk
(*her city councillor entry*)

Rae Humberstone – *Labour*
75 Little Bury, Blackbird Leys
☎ 01865 779678
cllrhumberstone@oxford.gov.uks

Val Smith and Rae Humberstone will be doing street surgeries every other week. They can also visit people in their homes – ring or email to make arrangements.

Northfield Brook Ward

Stuart Craft – *Independent Working Class Association*
5 Emperor Gardens, Greater Leys, Oxford, OX4 7WB.
☎ 07733 274324
Surgery: Every Tuesday from 6.30 to 7.30pm at the Clockhouse.

Scott Seamons – *Labour*
2 Orchard Court Roase Hill Oxford OX4 4HJ
☎ 07910 595047
cllrsseamons@oxford.gov.uk

Oxfordshire County Council

Leys & Lye Division

Val Smith – *Labour*
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Surgery: Every third Friday at the Blackbird Leys Leisure Centre from 3.00pm

OXFORD CITY COUNCIL

What do Area Committees do?

The six Area Committees are responsible for the following:

abandoned vehicles ● street cleaning
dog wardens ● ditches and streams
decisions on planning applications
public toilets ● car parks ● allotments
parks and countryside management
street naming ● community centres

South East Area Committee Meetings:

Monday, 7 Feburary
6.30pm, venue to be confirmed

Monday, 7 March
6.30pm, venue to be confirmed

Monday, 4 April
6.30pm, venue to be confirmed

For further information ring 01865 252373

Leys News aims to bring you the best in local sporting action. If you would like to sponsor this page please email editor@leysnews.co.uk or ring 01865 711756

Leys Sports

Another well deserved home win

By Jacek Majewski

UNITED MOVED to within a point from a play-off place after a well deserved victory over Bradford City, despite having to come from behind yet again.

Scrappy close range goals from Steve McLean, who has just agreed to stay at Oxford until the end of the season, and Tom Craddock ensured the guests from Yorkshire went home empty-handed.

Bradford took the lead against the run of play after ten minutes from a corner eventually bundled in by David Syers.

The home side immediately started hunting for an equaliser even though the strong wind certainly did not help their cause. Before the referee blew for half time the players in yellow and blue had a few chances to score but they failed to make them count.

The equaliser, when it finally arrived, was fairly scrappy. A long-range shot from the substitute James Constable was beaten out by Lenny Pidgeley. MacLean was first to the loose ball and it looked like he'd taken a touch too many, but the Bradford keeper was unable to keep the ball from crossing the line.

It did not take much time for United to score the second goal and it was Constable again who turned out to be the architect, but this time it was Craddock who got the final touch to head home the driven cross to make it three goals in three games for the on-fire striker.

The visitors spend the rest of the game probing for an equaliser but in the end Oxford managed to hold onto the lead.

Oxford United - Bradford City 2:1

Goals: McLean 77' Craddock 82, ' - Syers 10'

United: Clarke - Batt, Wright, Worley, Tonkin - Hall (58'Heslop), McLaren, Clist, - Midson (58'Constable), McLean, Craddock (90'Sangare)
Bradford: Pidgeley - Eckersley, Kiernan, Oliver, Threlfall (88'Hanson) - Adeyemi, Syers, Bullock, O'Brien - Cullen (46'Evans), Daley (58'Speight)

Attendance - 7068 (575 visitors)

United defeated at Northampton

MANAGER CHRIS WILDER admitted defending set-pieces is Oxford United's Achilles heel after they again conceded from a corner in last Saturday's 2-1 defeat at Northampton.

The U's slipped to tenth in npower League Two as their magnificent run of six wins from seven, and three away wins on the bounce, came to an end.

The Cobblers struck first just before the break when their captain, Andy Holt, was unmarked to glance in a header at a corner.

Although Tom Craddock equalised, with his 12th of the season, Leon McKenzie headed home the winner on 67 minutes.

United let in goals from corners against Bradford at the Kassam Stadium last week, and against Southend in their previous home game on New Year's Day.

Recent League Games:

28/12 - Oxford - Macclesfield	2:1
01/01 - Southend - Oxford	2:0
03/01 - Torquay - Oxford	3:4
08/01 - Aldershot - Oxford	1:2

Calling all sportsmen and women!

Would you like Leys News to feature your sporting achievements on our back page?

Whether you play bowls with friends once a week, are a dart playing champ for your pub or belong to another local sports team, we want to hear from you!

Please get in touch by emailing us editor@leysnews.co.uk
or visit our website www.leysnews.co.uk and use our drop down menu.

If you would like to ring us, our number is 01865 711756 and our normal office hours are Tuesday and Wednesday 9am to 4pm and Thursdays 9am to 12 noon. Outside of these hours you can leave us a message and we will get back to you as soon as we can.

All the ways you can get involved with Leys News

1. Become a paid distributor. If you would like to deliver Leys News every month give us a call on 711756. You need to be over 14 and have a responsible attitude.

2. Write for the paper: We're always looking for writers and people with an eye for a story. We have a Community Journalism Project which is a flexible scheme where you will receive free training. For more information contact John on 711756 or email editor@leysnews.co.uk

3. Send in your photos, pictures or poems. These can be by adults or children and sent in by members of the public, children's groups or schools. Email to editor@leysnews.co.uk or post to Creativity Page, Leys News, 26 Kingfisher Green, Blackbird Leys, Oxford OX4 7BX.

4. Editorial meeting: Tell us what you want to see in the paper. Open to the public - just drop in. Meetings are usually held in the Boiler room cafe, Pegasus school. Look on our website for the date and time of the next meeting: www.leysnews.co.uk

5. Write a letter to us. Email to editor@leysnews.co.uk or post to Letters Page, Leys News, 26 Kingfisher Green, Blackbird Leys, Oxford OX4 7BX.

6. Office Volunteer: We are always happy to have office volunteers. No experience necessary. You will benefit by gaining experience and a reference for future paid work and by knowing you have made a contribution to your local community paper.

7. Enter our competitions: You have a very high chance of winning!

8. Become a Director with Leys News. We have meetings every 6 weeks to make decisions concerning the paper. Local people or members of other community groups are very welcome.

For more information contact John on 01865 711756 or email officemanager@leysnews.co.uk

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PRESENTS The BOB MARLEY BIRTHDAY SESSIONS

4th Feb. @ E.O.C.C.

9pm - 12.30am £2

Featuring

ADDIS ABABA, DAN-I, NATTY MARK & MC TONY DREAD

5th Feb. @ SHELLEY ARMS CRICKET RD 12 - 8pm

Featuring

TONY DREAD, GARVIN DAN, SISTER GREY & PRINCE OLLIE

Caribbean Food, Children's Play Area, Face Painting - Antonio

Sessions feat. Saxophone - Sis Ali & Drumming - Hugo, Shakaman & Natty

http://africanschooluk.blogspot.com/